

and Senate conference committee. As important, the proposal also lacks the important reforms I've repeatedly called for.

After last week's short-term extension of the farm bill, Congress now has only 4 days to provide certainty to America's farmers and ranchers. Despite the passage of more than a year since my administration unveiled a responsible and forward-looking

farm bill proposal, there are no signs that the conference committee will reach agreement on an acceptable farm bill by Friday. I therefore call on Congress to provide our agricultural producers with the certainty to make sound business and planting decisions about this year's crop by extending current law for at least 1 year.

Statement on the No Child Left Behind Act *April 22, 2008*

Today Education Secretary Margaret Spellings took an important step towards strengthening and improving the No Child Left Behind Act. In the 6 years since its enactment, this law has delivered real results for students across the country. Students are achieving record math and reading scores, and African American and Hispanic students are making significant progress, posting alltime high scores in a number of categories.

No Child Left Behind was a bipartisan achievement. Unfortunately, at this time, Congress hasn't made noteworthy progress toward strengthening the law. In January,

I indicated that the Secretary should move forward on reforms she can undertake administratively if Congress fails to act.

Secretary Spellings's announced package of regulations and pilot programs will address the dropout crisis in America, strengthen accountability, improve our lowest performing schools, and ensure that more students get access to high-quality tutoring. Her actions build on a series of administrative steps we've taken to provide additional flexibility to strengthen and improve the law to ensure continued progress toward the goal of every child reading and doing math at grade level by 2014.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Michael E. DeBakey *April 23, 2008*

Madam Speaker, Mr. Leader, Members of Congress, fellow Texans, distinguished guests, Dr. and Mrs. DeBakey: I'm honored to join you on this day of celebration. Throughout our Nation's history, the Congressional Gold Medal has been awarded sparingly, in recognition of the tremendous accomplishments that it takes to earn this high honor. The recipients of this medal who have come from the world of science

are few, but they are iconic. They include Thomas Edison, Walter Reed, and Jonas Salk. Today we gather to recognize that Michael DeBakey's name belongs among them.

I appreciate the members of the Texas delegation, Senator Hutchison, Representative Green, and others, who sponsored this legislation.